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and for chemical operations, which are larger and better than those of any other mining school in the world. The value of all these must be close on two hundred thousand dollars, and the work has been enormous. Nor can a good school be established with less labor or less expense. But the results are commensurately great. Among all the most famous schools in the world, there is not one so well supplied with apparatus, and not one where all the departments are carried on with the same equal care. Remarkable as it may seem, no school in Europe, unless that in St. Petersburg is to be excepted, can compare with this in the appointments either of its chemical or its assay laboratories.

If the other schools which are to be founded in this country are established with equal care, fifty years will see a great change for the better in American mines. The enormous losses which are to-day experienced, even in the best conducted works, and the absurdities which are perpetrated in the name of mining, will pass away with the ignorance that causes them.

JOHN A. CHURCH.

ART. IV. — THE CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM.

SOME forty years ago a President of the United States first avowed and acted upon the determination to make the use of governmental patronage a means of partisan control in public affairs and of party success in political strife.

From that day to this the corrupting influence of such a use of the appointing power has been constantly widening, reaching out into new circles, until there is no backwoods hamlet so obscure that its moral atmosphere has escaped the contagion of the degrading hunt for place. Beginning with the purpose of moulding an independent Congress to the Executive will, the power of patronage was found to be too seductive, and no limits could be put to its use. The pettiest administrative places were brought into the pool from which the prizes were apportioned; and when the last and least clerkship had been

distributed, every deputy-constable appointed, and the mechanics' and laborers' places about a navy-yard made subservient to party success as distinguished from the public advantage, the horse-leech cry of "give" was only more clamorous; new places must be created that they might be given away, and dishonest gains in office had to be winked at or shared, on the plea of party necessity or interest.

The mischiefs and abuses in the present system have gradually become known, until at length it seems to be almost universally recognized that our civil service, as it exists, is little better than a nuisance, that must be thoroughly reformed, unless we are to admit that republican government is a failure in the ordinary business administration of public affairs. The people of the country earnestly desire that the public service should be honest and efficient, and are eager to find some practical mode of reaching the end they aim at. They are told by those who profess to have experience in public affairs, but who have no faith in the possibility of a reform, or no desire for it, that the present is the only practicable way of supporting a party, and that without such support none of the results can be secured for which the party is organized.

It seems desirable that those who have had some experience in public life, without losing faith in the practicability of a satisfactory organization of the civil service, should also be heard; and perhaps they could do no more valuable work than to give, without reserve, the results of their observation of the present system, and their views of the means by which a better may be reached.

So long as a rapidly growing nation was comparatively free from taxation, and the abounding wealth of the country made everybody careless of expense, it was easy to shut our eyes to the growth of evils which seemed of little consequence. Now, however, our burden of debt is enormous, and our taxation beyond anything we had dreamed of before the war. The necessity for collecting and disbursing an immense revenue has greatly enlarged the machinery of administration; and the mischiefs of a wrong system have multiplied at the very time when we need every help in diminishing the burden that a proper organization of the public service could give.

The people are aware of this, and their determination to try what reform can do has become significantly apparent.

The administrative offices of the country are naturally divided into two classes, viz. those which are filled by popular election and those which are filled by appointment. The election system has its own evils, calling for reform, and the problem of making elections the things they ought to be, or of carrying out a truly republican scheme of representation in such a manner as to secure a real obedience to the will of the people, is one not easy to solve satisfactorily. It also must occupy a good share of the thoughts and efforts of the friends of free government, but our present inquiry is limited to that part of the civil service which is filled by appointment. It may turn out that, in seeking a practical solution of our difficulties, interchanges will have to be made between the two classes of offices, some which are now filled by appointment being made elective, and *vice versa*.

For our present purpose it must be assumed that the proper classification of places and employments has been made, and that we are dealing only with those which experience determines to be properly or necessarily under the control of the appointing power. We have to ask what are the facts in reference to the existing modes of appointment, and what are the remedies which promise to cure the evils which we discover.

Let us begin at the fountain-head of the dispensation of patronage, — with the President of the United States, — and inquire how he stands related to the officials of the country, and how his efficiency as the Executive is affected by this relation.

The outward conditions are those which first strike an observer. On the advent of a new administration, we know that the capital swarms with crowds of office-seekers applying for every imaginable place, from a diplomatic position at a foreign court to a messengership in a department at home. They come armed with recommendations and credentials which experience has proven to be worthless as evidences of character or capacity, but which certify on their face that the bearer is one of the most capable and deserving of men, whose labors in the election of the incoming President were of the most signal

and decisive value. It may be safely asserted that the disposition to please an applicant is sufficiently strong in the majority of our fellow-citizens to make it certain that any shrewd and importunate person can secure an array of names to his recommendations sufficient to prove him fit and worthy to be made Minister to Great Britain. Yet it is upon the number and weight of names so procured that the President is overwhelmed with demands for appointment. His anteroom and halls are thronged by the applicants, the more fortunate or important of them pressing their Senator or Representative into the service, to introduce them and stand sponsor for their merits and claims. The facility with which written recommendations are procured leads to duplicity on the part of the persons giving them; and it is no uncommon thing for one who has written a high eulogium upon the character and acquirements of a place-hunter, to write a private note begging that his formal indorsement may not be regarded of any weight, or to seek a private interview in which he will state that the person is quite the reverse of the picture drawn of him in the testimonial filed. With the knowledge of this duplicity and of the farcical hollowness of the whole business of giving recommendations and testimonials, the President and his secretaries must receive the endless tide of applicants, listening to the praises spoken by an official friend, with, perhaps, a note from the same official in the drawer of the table at which they sit contradicting every word of the high-flown panegyric so glibly poured into their ears, and with a feeling of wearied disgust at the necessity of receiving with equal serenity the hypocritical praises and the furtive denial of them from the same lips. Mr. Lincoln's grim joke about deciding between applicants by the avoirdupois weight of their recommendations was, like many of his jokes, a most keen satire upon the utter worthlessness of this mode of determining a man's fitness for public office. Yet when once it is regarded settled that official positions are to be distributed anew by every administration among its "friends," there is little better that can be done. So few of those who apply can possibly be personally known to the President or his advisers, that it must remain a choice among total strangers, in which every effort to gain an insight into the worth and fitness of the applicant is

neutralized by the consciousness that the system itself has destroyed the value of testimony in such cases. Despair of reaching satisfactory results begets carelessness and haste in disposing of what is unpleasant business at best ; and the time when it can be announced that all vacancies are filled is looked forward to as a comparatively blissful future, in which the real business of the country may receive thought and attention. That time, however, does not come. No sooner is a man in place than his rivals or enemies are on his track, ready to prove that he was the most unfit person that could be chosen, and that the party will be utterly demoralized if he is not instantly removed and his place given to another. If a month or two were all that is wasted in this employment, it would be bad enough ; but the truth is, that by far the larger part of the time of the President and all the members of his Cabinet is occupied by this worse than useless drudgery, during the whole term of his office, and it forms literally and absolutely the staple of their work. It is therefore no figure of speech to say that administering the government means the distribution and redistribution of its offices, and that its diplomacy, finance, military, naval, and internal administration are the minor affairs which the settled policy of the country has relegated to such odds and ends of time as may be snatched from the greater cares of office.

But this is by no means the whole of it. The members of Congress do not escape from similar burdens. Instead of studying the subjects of legislation, their tables are piled with letters from constituents seeking their influence to obtain place, and ranging the whole gamut from obsequious petition to insolent and imperative demand. At the beck of some local politician whose influence at home must be courted or feared, they leave their seats in the Senate or House and visit the White House or one of the departments, to introduce their importunate neighbor, and say everything in his behalf which the utmost straining of conscience will permit. They leave the breakfast-table to find numbers waiting for them to invoke their assistance and presence in applications to be pressed before the opening of the day's session. They often apologize to the heads of departments for their own importunity, declaring with per-

fect truth and sincerity that they get rid of all the cases they can decently put off, and only bring those they cannot possibly get rid of.

Leaving Washington, we do not leave behind us the application nuisance. Every collector of customs or of internal revenue, every assessor or postmaster, and every United States marshal, finds himself in a greater or less degree the object of the same kind of pressure for the subordinate places at his disposal, varied by the occasional claim of a member of Congress or of a committee to dictate to him the nominations to be made.

All this is on the assumption that the appointing power is not used with any deliberate attempt to make it a political engine, but that we are only dealing with the evil of office-seeking in itself, including the obstructions to public business and the other mischiefs which have grown out of the widespread habit of seeking official position, under an exaggerated popular taste for public place.

If, however, we add a purpose to make political capital or the means of personal advancement or profit by the use of the power of appointment, it becomes at once apparent that what was before only an annoyance and a clog to the transaction of public affairs becomes a positive corruption, with terrible depths of abuse. Suppose a President to have determined to use his patronage to enforce a policy or to secure a re-election. The bargaining for appointment becomes at once a systematic bribery scarcely more disguised than the system of corruption introduced into the English Parliament under the Walpole Ministry. Euphemisms may be found to avoid terms of direct bargain and sale, as they are in all other modes of dishonest dealing, but the fact is none the less real and none the less understood that a barter of places for votes or influence is made; and the chaffering for price is carried on by a class of brokers with almost as much openness as in the stock or corn exchange. Adroitness and skill may cover up the more unpleasant features of the transaction, and a lack of those qualities may leave the grosser and more shameful evidences of bribery to become apparent; the difference is one of appearance only, and the degrading effect upon all concerned is scarcely less in the one case than in the other.

A political difference between the Executive and Congress only increases the corrupting elements. During Mr. Johnson's administration, it was notorious that duplicity of the most shameless description was used in obtaining an appointment from one end of the Avenue and a confirmation from the other. It would be consoling to be able to believe that still lower forms of bribery and cheating were not made use of. In many instances two wholly separate sets of recommendations and credentials were procured ; one proving that the applicant was a faithful supporter of the President and a reliable friend in his contest with Congress, the other proving him with equal conclusiveness to be a radical of the radicals and an utter despiser of the Presidential policy. More than this, it may be easily proven that one or the other party was often cognizant of the fraud that was perpetrated, and the partisans of either side congratulated each other that an appointment or a confirmation had been procured by which the other party was completely cheated. To one who was at all acquainted with the intrigues then rife at Washington, it is no wonder that speculation had invaded every department of the administration, and that a maximum of taxation was producing a minimum of revenue. The condition of things was one in which honesty was a chimera and fraud was reaping its harvest. It was a game of "diamond cut diamond," in which the two parties were using all the resources and refinements of intrigue to get the start of each other in the control of the offices ; whilst dishonest incumbents were plundering the people under the shelter of a Tenure-of-Office Act which seemed to be skilfully adapted to remove every trace of responsibility from both the appointing and confirming powers. The Republicans in Congress were complaining that the President refused to remove men who were indicted or convicted in the courts, and the friends of the President retorted that the Senate refused to consent to the removal of others who were proven to be plunderers of the treasury on the like evidence. It would be useless to inquire whether either or both were right ; it is enough to state the undeniable fact, that a condition of things existed which rivalled the most corrupt era that can be found in the history of any nation. Men were known to offer five thousand dollars for the

influence which might secure an appointment to a gauger's situation in the revenue service, where fifteen hundred dollars was the limit of the pay that could be honestly earned, and when it was morally certain that the advent of a new administration would terminate the employment within a year. This is simply a type of similar transactions extending through many grades of the public service.

But why dwell upon a period which we all try to believe was exceptional in our history? Because the fact that such a state of things was possible is the strongest proof that the system under which it existed was an utterly wrong one. The proposition to which we must come is that the civil service of the country must be so organized that it shall be impossible for any President to make use of the appointing power as a means of enforcing a policy, or of controlling votes in Congress or elsewhere. We must cultivate a public sentiment which shall regard and treat such a use of power as in itself corrupt and corrupting, and at war with the true principles of representative government.

Besides we must remember that as no man becomes utterly vile at a jump, according to the ancient proverb, so no reformation of an organized government can be speedily made under the system which has been the vehicle of corruption. The way back is not more easy than the downward road. We may reduce somewhat the more glaring evils; we may diminish a little the peculations; we may increase the watchfulness against frauds, and so restore a comparative honesty of administration; but a wrong system will balk the efforts of the best Executive, and prevent anything but the merest palliation of the evils we endure. The individual who has gone far into bad ways must be converted, and base a new life upon a new rule of life; the nation which has drifted into wrong systems must also apply the axe to the root of the tree, and base its reformed government upon a new principle of administration.

We have been looking at the effects of Executive abuse of the appointing power; let us trace its influence in the legislative department of the government. When a President determines to use the patronage at his disposal for a personal or party purpose, it results practically in farming it out to members of

Congress. He may retain the right to favor special personal friends and retainers here and there, or allow his Cabinet officers to do the same by theirs, but this will all amount to but a drop in the bucket. The influences most useful and most formidable to the Executive are in Congress. If local selection or distribution is to be exercised, the congressman is the person most fully advised as to the value of various local influences, and the importance of conciliating or rewarding them. He is also in most cases the most efficient and active coworker with the President, if he can be induced to accept a common purpose and labor for a common end. Assuming, therefore, a purpose to maintain what is known as a party rule, through the usual subordinations of rank and importance in the organization, the congressman becomes almost inevitably the most active and powerful of the dispensers of patronage, since he alone, of the several departments of the government, is in immediate contact with the people, and has a district to look after not too large to permit a general personal acquaintance with all the more prominent and active citizens and politicians in it.

If there were any sovereign method of insuring disinterestedness in our legislators, and an eye single to the public good, the appointment by a responsible Executive upon such intelligent advice would produce the best results the system of patronage is capable of. Indeed, in the early days of the Republic, before the beauties of rotation in office had been discovered, we had a fair example of what might be done in this way; and for many years there was very little to complain of. What is popularly known as the Jeffersonian rule as to qualification and fitness seems to have been pretty fairly applied, and the traditions of the departments at Washington affirm that a removal for a political reason was almost wholly unknown till after the close of the administration of the second Adams. The time came, however, when American politicians adopted the war-cry, "To the victors belong the spoils," and we have to confess with shame that its effect upon our politics was the same as the cry of "Beauty and booty" upon an army entering a captured city. We have become familiarized with a disgraceful scramble to such an extent that we now wonder at

our own apathy, and begin to realize the fact that the public conscience had become partially seared.

The practice of using the gift of offices for selfish or merely partisan purposes could not and did not stop with the President. The congressman who received his quota of the patronage had his own ends to accomplish with it. There have always been in Congress many men of elevated character and purposes, who have made a strictly conscientious use of their powers and influence. The country would long since have gone to ruin if this had not been so. But there has also been a large and growing class who have deliberately used their position and its influence solely to retain their seats and further their purposes of personal ambition. This class of persons has gradually come to regard as their personal appanage an aliquot part of the public offices, equal to the proportion of one to the whole number of congressmen, and have declared themselves robbed of their rights if it was not fully accorded to them. They have used this patronage systematically and avowedly to retain their own places, and strengthen themselves in their several districts or States. For this purpose it has been manifestly necessary to treat a rival or an opponent within their own party as if he belonged to the opposing organization. An authentic and recent instance of this will explain and illustrate the practical working of the custom better than much general statement. A gentleman who had held one of the highest positions in the government of his own State, and who had been recognized as one of the most powerful supporters of his party in the State, desired, for what seemed to him honorable and sufficient reasons, to secure a minor appointment abroad. He was personally well known to every member of the delegation of his State in Congress, and some of these were addressed with a request to favor his appointment. Their responses expressed the highest regard and appreciation of his public character and services, but signified that it was an understood rule that the assistance of other members of the delegation must depend upon the support of the member from his own district. The person applying, however, was not the "friend" and personal supporter of the member from his district, and that member's approval and

recommendation could not be obtained. The whole delegation, consequently, felt obliged to refuse their assistance. The gentleman thereupon addressed the head of one of the departments with a statement of the facts, and inquired whether one who had been a somewhat prominent supporter of the administration in his State, and had been elected to an important State office by his fellow-citizens, was to be held to be entirely at the mercy of his Representative in Congress, so far as Federal favor was concerned. The result of this appeal was a promise from the proper quarter of an appointment of a local character at home, the position abroad having been meanwhile filled. This promise being made known, the Representative at once made vigorous protest, putting it avowedly on the ground that it would be his own political death to allow one who might be a rival to have a Federal appointment within the district. The protest was recognized as within the custom in such cases, and the promise was withdrawn. On this the friends of the disappointed man began to make somewhat dangerous agitation at home; an indignant denunciation was received from the applicant himself, and a new attempt at compromise was made by the offer of another place out of the district, which was declined. The result was a disturbance in the district, producing what is called "demoralization" of the party, and an opposition member was returned to Congress at the next election. As is usual in such cases, the moral drawn from the occurrence varies according to the stand-point. One faction declares that the lesson taught is to tighten the party discipline and "shoot the stragglers"; others being foolish enough to conclude that the thing proven is that the civil service needs reformation, and that "patronage" should be cut up by the roots.

The case is a perfectly fair sample of its class in all particulars, and illustrates with fidelity the tendency to disruption and defeat, which is found wherever a dominant party attempts to perpetuate its power by the distribution of the "spoils," which tendency is strong in the direct ratio of the intelligence and independence of the constituency.

Running down the scale of honor and importance of places, we find everywhere among self-seeking men the same eager-

ness to use the power they have to perpetuate their tenure of official life. Sycophancy, adulation, bribery, and all the rest of the loathsome catalogue of political vices, thicken as we descend, till we reach the "rough" doing the ballot-stuffing or the curbstone fighting for his party, and making his gains by stealing the money he has received from some candidate to "treat" the independent voters who may be bought with a dram of whiskey.

From top to bottom, the whole class of politicians who avow the purpose of keeping up "the party" by the appeal to the selfish desires for place and profit are bound together by the common interest of the "ins" to keep themselves in and to keep all others out. The term "log-rolling" has passed into our political vocabulary, because it so exactly describes the trading politician's action on the principle of "help my scheme and I'll help yours." A corrupting distribution of patronage is the natural and almost inevitable result of the common purpose of office-holders to preserve their places; and if we once admit that a President may use his appointing power as a party machine, or to influence his own re-election, an inexorable logic carries us to the conclusion that it is admissible and proper for a congressman to use his share of the patronage in the same way, and to perpetuate his power by the ostracism of every independent and self-respecting man in his district; whilst the whole favor and influence of the government is given to the circle of obsequious followers, who are prompt to wheel or face when they receive the order from their commander. It is beginning to be apparent that the American people think this is not the style of government they bargained for, either in 1776 or in 1861.

Any one who reflects for a moment upon the natural workings of cunning selfishness will comprehend how, out of the common purpose to keep themselves in power, which rules the professional politicians, has grown the custom of levying assessments upon office-holders of all grades. The party has come, in the main, to mean nothing but the organized company of placemen. Levies may be made upon the general public for votes, and a popular demand for any reform which does not touch the offices may be zealously or even vocifer-

ously supported. It is the prime characteristic of the true politician to out-Herod Herod in that way, otherwise the honest voters could not be led with success ; but when it comes to the distribution of places and profits, no European guild or secret brotherhood ever worked with more singleness of purpose or absolute accord, than does this class of persons to keep everything of value within the proper ring. The first lesson of a subordinate, therefore, is that he owes his place to influence. Second, that if he would preserve his place he must recognize and do homage to that influence. Third, that he must never let any sense of duty to the public interfere with the plans and purposes of those upon whose influence he is dependent. Fourth, that in the interests of his leaders he must do and pay what he is bid, and ask no questions.

Out of this kind of education comes the willingness to pay assessments on salaries without rebellion. Men of good character in subordinate places learn to say with passive submission, " My family's bread depends upon my retaining my place, and we had better have the half-loaf than no bread ; asking no questions for conscience' sake, as to what is done with the rest." This is what has made it possible that a vulgar ruffian, clothed with the rank of a United States marshal, could stand at the pay-table of a custom-house, and see to it that the party tax was inexorably deducted then and there by the government officer from the monthly salary of each clerk and inspector, as he stepped up for his money and receipted for more than came into his hands. This, too, is what has made it possible, under another and better party administration, for the pay officer in the Capitol to inform clerks, doorkeepers, pages, and folding-boys that they were " docked " so much of their salaries by order of a party committee. Finally, a long course of this education that benumbs the moral sense has made it possible for committees of the party of purity and reform to throw away even the thin disguise which had before testified to a respect for public opinion, and to address circulars to government employees, levying in form an income tax not known to the statute-book, to be paid into the hands of men rendering no account to the tax-payers, and in regard to the use and disbursements of which the tax-payers would have neither knowledge nor control.

To liken this to the voluntary contribution to a fund in the hands of a committee of our own choice is a simple addition of insult to injury ; and when to these facts is added the other, that it is generally believed and understood that the object of one of the most important of these committees is to secure the re-election of the present congressmen of their party, and is in fact as far as possible a mutual-assurance society for the preservation of place, the climax of the abuse of patronage has been capped. It becomes simply a machine for preventing a free representation of the people.

Most of the abuses above referred to may be called political, as distinguished from those which are strictly administrative, and which are found in the departmental conduct of the public business. The effect of such a system upon the subordinates of the government in the departments at Washington, or in the various Federal offices of the customs, the internal revenue, the Indian service, the Land department, etc., might easily be predicted without actual experience. It matters little what the law may be as to qualification, if the law-makers and the Executive have a common interest in reducing the statute to a dead letter. Thus there has been a law in existence many years, directing that candidates for clerkships in the departments should be subjected to a preliminary examination as to their intellectual competence. Yet this law from its very enactment has been habitually disregarded, or the form of an examination under it made the veriest farce. Instances are told in the departments of the sum total of the examination consisting of a single question, such as, "What did you have for breakfast?" or, "Who recommended you for appointment?" or "Where would you go to get your pay at the end of the month?" Nor are these fanciful burlesques; they are simply extreme instances of a laxity so general, that it may be fairly said that an examination has hardly ever stood in the way of the appointment of a person recommended "influentially." It is not necessary to assume that the examiners corruptly refuse to discharge a duty. In the first place, the experience of every civilized nation has proven that any examination not rigidly competitive in its character soon degenerates into a mere form. The *rationale* of this, as well as his

invaluable testimony to the fact, is given by Mill in his familiar treatise on Representative Government. He says: —

“A mere pass examination never, in the long run, does more than exclude absolute dunces. When the question in the mind of the examiner lies between blighting the prospects of an individual, and performing a duty to the public which, in the particular instance, seldom appears of first-rate importance, and when he is sure to be bitterly reproached for doing the first, while in general no one will either know or care whether he has done the latter, the balance, unless he is a man of very unusual stamp, inclines to the side of good-nature. A relaxation in one instance establishes a claim to it in others, which every repetition of indulgence makes it more difficult to resist; each of these in succession becomes a precedent for more, until the standard of proficiency sinks gradually to something almost contemptible.” — Ch. XIV.

Precisely this is what has occurred under our own system, with the additional downward tendency that has been given by the “spoils” theory of the distribution of office. If a politician has of right a certain number of clerkships assigned him as his share, it requires a very little addition to the theory to give him complete control of the question of capacity and fitness. Such has been practically the result, and the departments have been made the asylum for the worthless and incompetent dependants of persons “of influence,” who have often received their pay without giving any return for it, because the head of the division or bureau could not intrust them with the simplest clerical duty. This has often extended to cases in which the grossest and most offensive immoralities have been shielded and protected by that personage, so potential in Washington, “the member from his district.” An instance may be taken from the experience of the chief of an important bureau as given by himself. He had a division of clerks of general fair character, among whom were heads of families of high and even religious morality. Into this division, by the influence of a prominent member of Congress, was introduced a young man who proved to be not only of little use as a clerk, but so wantonly and offensively obscene in his common conversation as to outrage the feelings of every decent man, and to provoke from his fellow-clerks a general remonstrance against his being allowed to remain. The head of the bureau

took the case up and recommended his dismissal on the double ground of general incompetency and gross immorality. The congressman, with full knowledge of the facts, opposed and for some time succeeded in preventing the removal, and when at last, upon the earnest and energetic instance of the chief of bureau, the fellow was finally disposed of, it was only to remove him to another bureau, and the officer who had procured it to be done was abused and persecuted by the "member" whose patronage had been interfered with. A very slight familiarity with the departments is enough to convince any candid person that a minority of really competent officers are doing the work, obstructed, trammelled, and burdened oftentimes with the necessity of performing over again the work of the incompetents who are prompt in nothing but their appearance at the pay-table at the end of the month.

The efforts made from time to time to correct or mitigate the evils are only temporary palliatives ; and however energetic the heads of departments and of bureaus may be in their efforts at reform, they labor against customs that are inveterate and almost omnipotent. The subordinates themselves have no faith in any permanent reform under the present system of appointments. The general conviction was expressed by a clerk in the Interior Department to an industrious new-comer, when he said, " This is all very well, but before you have been here as long as I have, you will learn that it is influence and not work that, in the long run, will keep you in your place or promote you."

Under any reasonably efficient system, promotion ought to mean a recognition of merit and capacity. Yet instance after instance could be given in which heads of bureaus have declared that the greatest obstacle in the way of inspiring the clerical force with new energy was the fact that the higher places were filled by incompetents who had been appointed and retained only by superior " influence."

When we inquire what must be the necessary result of selecting such officers as Indian agents, local land officers, officers of the revenue, etc., on such a system, the answer is easily given. The goodness or badness of the selection will depend very much on the character of the community in which the

officer must serve. In one of our country districts, where the official must perform his duty in the eyes of an intelligent and virtuous people, where every act is likely to be known and criticised by the whole constituency, the chances will be greatly in favor of securing good officers ; but in the great cities, where individuality is lost in the greatness of the mass, and in the Indian country where no civilized community exists and the officer is left to his own conscience and the mere forms of law, the whole country knows how impotent our system has been to secure satisfactory results.

Of course there must have been some redeeming influences, or we should long ago have been reduced to anarchy. Such checks upon extreme demoralization have been found in the fact that there has always been in Congress a goodly number of men who were in earnest in trying to serve their country, and that not only have the Presidents and Cabinet officers been generally men of good purposes, but from their very situation they have had some interest in preventing the civil service from becoming as inefficient as our unfortunate system would permit, or at least in diminishing the grossest abuses of the use of influence and patronage. Thus it has generally turned out that the heads of departments, however ardent politicians themselves, have sooner or later been found growing conservative on the question of appointments and removals ; and even if they continue to admit the general theory of the congressional distribution of patronage, they have tried to limit its practice, to hold on to tried and competent subordinates, and to yield slowly when they must yield to the clamor for the "general sweep" of which the public hears so much.

These saving influences are only palliatives, however, and temper the evils of which we complain only in the unsatisfactory way that some Oriental despotisms have been wittily said to be tempered by assassination.

What, then, is the remedy ? It is to apply to the civil service, completely and thoroughly, the plain principles of common business administration ; to separate the public offices, absolutely and forever, from all favoritism, nepotism, and "influence" ; to declare patronage in all its forms to be anti-republican and dangerous to the state ; to find and practise

upon a principle of selection for office which shall give every citizen of the country a perfectly equal chance to prove his capacity and fitness for the public service; and to obtain a position in it when he has made the proof, with thorough independence of President, secretary, or congressman, and simply and solely because of his citizenship and his fitness. It is further, to adopt in the permanent civil service a tenure of office during good behavior, with the hope of rising to the highest grades of the routine service by industry and strict devotion to duty.

In brief, the principle to be adopted is, admission to the civil service only upon the results of a competitive examination open to all, and dismissal only upon ascertained failure of capacity or character.

There should be no attempt to disguise the fact that it is the purpose of this theory of administration to prevent the civil service being used in any manner or to any extent as a means of party success, except as a thoroughly good and business-like administration would itself commend to popular favor the party which should practise it.

Perhaps as good a statement of this view as we could make would be to say that the administration of the public business and the selection and discipline of the routine officers must no longer be regarded as a *means* in politics at all, but an *end* at which political effort should as distinctly aim as at a proper system of imposts and internal taxes. Until an entirely satisfactory system is reached, no other question in political economics should be regarded as superior to it, because no other affects more vitally the pecuniary interests of the people, or the success and stability of real republicanism in our government. We should no more admit that the routine civil offices of the government can properly be made a political fund for the purchase of party success or the reward of partisan effort, than we should that the revenues, when collected, should be used for the same purpose. The civil service cannot be made a party cash-fund to secure the revenue system which the party advocates, any more than the taxes can be used in the same way on the plea that the party is seeking to secure a good civil service. Whatever change of form the proposition

may take, nothing less radical than this will meet the difficulty and correct the abuse.

Let us look for a moment at the several elements of the principle above enounced as the true rule for the civil-service organization, viz. admission only upon competitive examinations open to all, and dismissal only upon ascertained failure of capacity or character.

Perhaps enough has already been said upon the necessity of making the examinations competitive. The authority of Mill has been quoted as to the worthlessness of any mere "pass" examination; but in view of the fact that England has already made a successful effort to reform her own service upon the principles which that eminent man has laid down, a further extract from his treatise may be proper. He says it is "*absolutely necessary* that the examinations should be competitive, and the appointments given to those who are most successful." As an example of the comparative results of the two methods of examination, even when free from political influence and intrigue, he refers to Oxford and Cambridge, saying: "Examinations for degrees at the two great universities have generally been as slender in their requirements as those for honors are trying and serious." Applying the principle to all public examinations, he sums up as follows: —

"When, on the contrary, the appointments are given to those, among a great number of candidates, who most distinguish themselves, and when the successful competitors are classed in order of merit, not only each is stimulated to do his very utmost, but the influence is felt in every place of liberal education throughout the country. It becomes with every schoolmaster an object of ambition and an avenue to success to have furnished pupils who have gained a high place in these competitions, and there is hardly any other mode in which the state can do so much to raise the quality of educational institutions throughout the country." — *Rep. Gov.*, Ch. XIV.

Apart from the weight of so decisive an authority, our own experience proves the necessity of making examinations competitive, because, in spite of the law requiring a general examination, our practice has notoriously and undeniably become no better than if no examination whatever were required. A spasmodic effort to make the examination mean something

may be made when public sentiment is for the moment aroused; but he must be dull indeed who does not see that when the mere scratch of a pen of the head of a department or a bureau may decide in favor of an applicant influentially supported, and nobody be at all the wiser for it, there is no security at all against a return at any moment to the most undisguised forms of office jobbing. Attempts to uphold any form of mere pass examination, therefore, should be treated as a device of the enemies of a true civil-service system to avoid an issue which cannot be fairly faced.

As far as the experience of any of our own departments and bureaus has gone, the evidence is most decisive as to the value of the competitive system. The condition of the Patent Office, at the termination of Commissioner Fisher's recent connection with it, may be confidently appealed to as demonstrative proof of what we are asserting. The class of younger officers admitted under competitive examinations is doing much more and much better work than has been usually accomplished by men of similarly brief experience in the office. No one could become even superficially acquainted with the organization of that important bureau without seeing that a spirit of emulation and zeal in their work had taken the place of a listless and negligent performance of duty. A single fact may be mentioned as being an experience almost if not quite unique in the history of department administration at Washington for the last forty years. During the past year the place of one of the principal examiners of patents became vacant, the salary being twenty-five hundred dollars, and the place regarded one of the most desirable in the Interior Department. The Commissioner of Patents announced that it would be filled by a competitive examination among the first assistants; and such was the general understanding of the firmness with which the system would be adhered to, that not a single application for the position was made either to the Commissioner or the head of the department during some three months that it remained open.

The objection is often made by those who have given the subject a very superficial consideration, that the successful competitors in these examinations will usually be boys fresh from school or college, and that older and better men who have

become "rusty" in their school knowledge will fail. Two answers to this are conclusive. One is that the examinations in every well-regulated system are so ordered that the specific knowledge most used in the bureau itself is that which counts for most in the competition. The general education of the applicant is tested, and the only conceivable method of doing that must be, as Mill has remarked, to examine him upon the topics of a general education. But this is so conducted as to call out his special fitness for the place he seeks, if he has it. Thus, in the Census Office, as we shall presently see, the test part of the examination runs mostly into arithmetic, and the computations in numbers which form the basis of statistical compilation. In the Patent Office, the principles of mechanics, hydrostatics, and hydraulics counted for more. This is well shown by the report of the competitive examination for the place of chief assistants in the Patent Office in 1869, and of which the results were given by the Commissioner in his general report for that year. One hundred questions were put to the candidates, the questions being counted equally in the grading of merit. Of these ten were upon general exercises, like the drafting of business letters, preparation of papers, penmanship, etc.; ten were upon geography and astronomy; seven were upon history; fifteen were upon mathematics and the principles of mechanical drawing; twenty were upon patent law and the practice of the bureau; and thirty-eight were in physical philosophy. It is therefore evident that the applicant might fail in nearly every part of his examination but the two last divisions, and that his rustiness in history or geography need not exclude him if he were well prepared in things most germane to his duties.

But a still more conclusive answer is the statement of the actual result of the examination, showing that it was not the school-boys who carried off the prizes, nor yet always those who had had most experience in the office. In two examinations of classes of seventeen and twenty-four competitors respectively, *four* were appointed from the head of each list. The following table, which is taken from the annual report of the Commissioner, shows the age and the most significant facts in the history of the successful men, illustrating the working

of the system. It should silence all cavils of the kind we are now noticing:—

First Examination.

No.	Age.	Where born.	Education.	Practical Experience.	Army or Navy Service.	Previous Office Service.
1	22	Ohio.	High School.	3½ years machinist.	None.	1 month.
2	50	Virginia.	Collegiate.	32 years engineer.	8 years.	21 months.
3	20	Maine.	Collegiate.	2 years cabinet-maker.	None.	2 months.
4	28	West Virginia.	Academical.	8 years printer.	2½ years.	2 years.

Second Examination.

1	40	Vermont.	Collegiate.	5 years.	None.	None.
2	31	England.	Common School.	None.	2½ years.	2½ years.
3	37	Pennsylvania.	Collegiate.	None.	1 year.	2 months.
4	33	Connecticut.	Collegiate.	Leather manufactory six months.	None.	None.

The organization of the Census Office has afforded quite as decisive evidence of the good effects of competition. As everybody knows, the Census Bureau is not a permanent organization, but is called into existence only at the beginning of each decade, for the purpose of taking the decennial census. The present bureau was therefore organized during the current year by the Superintendent of the Census, General Walker, who is a determined supporter of the civil-service reform. Down to the 15th of October six hundred and twenty-one persons were sent before the examining board on recommendations for clerkships. These were not taken at random from those who might apply, but were selected by the Secretary and the Superintendent from the best of the general class recommended for appointment in the department, or in that bureau. They were consequently a more than usually good average of the class of applicants before the departments, since considerable numbers withdrew on learning that the examination was to be competitive; and it may be safely said that few, if any, of the whole number would have been rejected under the usual modes of appointment. The examination was a written one, and the grade of merit, in a scale of one thousand, was fixed by the examiners in entire ignorance of the names of the persons whose papers were being scrutinized by them. It was made imperative that the applicant must reach four hundred in the scale to secure an appointment to a first or lowest regular class clerkship; and the appointments were made in

their order, from the top of the list. The report by grades, as given in the Annual Report of the Interior Department, is as follows:—

Over 950	900 to 950	800 to 900	700 to 800	600 to 700	500 to 600	450 to 500	400 to 450	300 to 400	200 to 300	100 to 200	Under 100	Total.
1	5	17	36	46	84	87	62	91	80	64	48	621

From this table it will be seen that only three hundred and thirty-eight succeeded in passing the examination, although only four tenths of the marks which would have indicated a perfect examination were required; and it is probably safe to say, that if the officers of the department had been able to adhere still more strictly to the proper principle, and throw the competition entirely open to all comers, it would not have been necessary to receive any whose merit was indicated by a grade of less than six hundred in the scale, of an examination no more severe than this. This would have included only one hundred and five of those actually examined. The bureau was proceeding carefully with an experiment, however, and it was thought wise to err on the side of moderation, and not to excite too great a clamor of opposing influences.

One thing, however, is demonstrated, that nearly half the class of well-recommended applicants, such as have usually obtained immediate and unconditional appointments to clerkships, were sifted out by a very moderate competition in the examination. This, of itself, speaks volumes as to the real competence of the average appointee; and yet it would prove a too favorable criterion by which to judge the standard of capacity in the older bureaus of the government.

Of course exclusion created a temporary clamor; and exaggerated stories were circulated regarding the severity of the examination. There were even instances of assertions by members of Congress that they could not have passed the examinations themselves; but as these assertions were supposed to be based upon the reports of disappointed applicants, who naturally tried to save their own credit by exaggerating the ordeal they had failed in, it would not be fair

to judge the congressmen by the test of the examination questions.

A publication of the questions used, with the answers actually given, *verbatim et literatim*, would be of great service in enlightening the public on the general topic we are discussing. An inspection of the penmanship would be still more decisive as to the qualification of the majority of applicants to become what may properly be called professional clerks. It is as much as the limits of such an article as this will permit, to say that the examination was chiefly arithmetical, as the statistical work of the bureau called for that class of ability; and the questions were so graded that a person of reasonably good penmanship, who spelled with tolerable accuracy, would be sure of avoiding rejection from the competitive list, if his examples in common arithmetic were correctly performed.

It should be carefully kept in mind, in the discussion of this subject, that we are not seeking in these examinations for legislators, generals, or governors. We are looking for *clerks* and subordinates, whose duties are in a routine that is clerical in its character. The duties of the governmental departments have more analogy to the general work of a banking-house than to any other; and we should secure a class of men who would naturally be found working their way up to the teller-ships, or perhaps the cashiership, of a bank. Fidelity, accuracy, industry, neatness, and rapidity in strictly clerical work, with the prospect of advancement to the head of a bureau, for those who develop real administrative talent, are what we should seek on the one hand, and offer as an inducement to effort on the other.

We may assert, with the most complete confidence, that competitive examinations are not only theoretically the best method of determining the qualifications of applicants for routine offices, but are proven by the experience of our own departments, as well as by that of other civilized nations, to be also the best practical means of securing a good civil service, and the only refuge from evils that become more intolerable the more closely they are viewed.

But how is it as to the *freedom* of competition? Should the examinations be open to all? Undoubtedly they should. By

our hypothesis we have discarded the corrupt system based upon patronage and influence ; and the only way is to make thorough work of it. We have declared that we are seeking by means of competition the best men that can be procured for the places we have to fill. To say that we will stop at political lines is to discard our principle, and lug in by the shoulders the very enemy we have been trying to expel, namely, favoritism and partiality in the selection. There are political places which must be distinctly and permanently recognized as such ; but they do not come within the list of routine offices ; and in the departments, at the seat of government, they would not necessarily include any one below the rank of Cabinet officer.

The practice of selecting from the adherents of a party always and necessarily leads to abuse. When it is applied to mechanics in an arsenal or a navy-yard, most people find no difficulty in seeing that, in a country where labor is as much in demand as it is here, such places can only be desirable when some advantage in wages and terms of labor is given beyond what could be procured from private employers. The places are then made *prizes*, and, as such, are given to favorites and partisans. It is precisely so in all other forms of employment. The idea that the government is to adopt some other scale of the value of labor than that which is fixed by the general laws which control the labor market of the country, is wholly untenable. Whether the work be clerical or mechanical, the state should pay what such service is fairly worth in the market, leaving it to the advantage found in the assured permanence of the employ to attract into it the best class of employees, of the kind required.

It is notorious that those who are serving the nation look upon it as a grievance if they are called upon to use the same industry, or give the same time to their duties, as is required in the private business of the country. Their hours of labor are shorter, they are not as closely occupied during those hours, their vacations are longer and more frequent, and the interruptions of a casual kind are much more numerous. Under a system in which no political favoritism was used, this could not be so, to the same extent as now ; although we may never

expect the public service to come quite up to the mark of a thrifty and well-managed private business.

Again, it is desirable that subordinate public officers should not be heated political partisans. Their right of private opinion they should religiously and jealously preserve, and vote according to that opinion ; but it would be every way better for the country that the governmental places should be filled by members of different parties indifferently. Corrupt administration would be much less likely when the chances of the exposure of improper conduct would be increased by the presence and knowledge of those who belonged to different parties. An *esprit de corps* would grow up, which would make it impossible to use the subordinates of a department for merely partisan work ; and they would be much more likely to remember that they are the servants of the whole people, and bound to watch closely the interests of the whole, and not of a part. Public sentiment would now condemn the head of one of our common schools who should make his office one in which he should try to convert his pupils to his own party in politics, or to use his office as a partisan ; but, paradox as it is now likely to seem, it is no less objectionable to have the ordinary administrative business of the country conducted with a view to party profit or advantage ; and it will not be long till the truth is recognized.

Upon the last of the elements of a good civil service, — permanence of tenure of office, — but little need be said. Establish free competitive examinations as the door into public employment, and the rest will soon take care of itself. Every interest of the people is so completely identified with the continuance of tried and faithful officers in their place, that it would not be long till public sentiment would as sharply condemn “ rotation ” in the civil departments as it would in the army or navy. We need skilled as well as capable officials. There ought to be systematic and continued disposition of business, instead of having every old claim, that has existed since the government was organized, returning for a new hearing once in four years or oftener.

The entire separation of the civil service from the control of politicians would secure a thorough and impartial congress-

sional criticism of all the administrative bureaus and their operations. The sloth and incompetence found in any department now is known by the members of Congress to be in no small measure due to the fact that their own friends and dependants have been forced into places. They know, also, that the pruning-knife would reach their own scions as quickly as another's if retrenchment, under a better system, were begun; and it requires no ordinary character to pass a "self-denying ordinance" of that kind. There have not been wanting demagogues who would declaim in favor of reducing the clerical force, and march straight to a department with an earnest appeal to crowd in one more clerk for them; but few men have the assurance for this.

The separation of patronage from public office would do as much as anything could do to elevate the class of men in the more important places of public life. It has been held to be the reproach of American politics, that few of our best men will enter the arena. The corrupting doctrine of the "spoils" has been a chief cause of this. Every village neighborhood is witness to the fact that elections to Congress have been very frequently influenced and nominations determined by a shameless bargaining of promises of place for votes and support. This jobbery has undeniably been the chief capital in trade of a large class of politicians. Take it from them, and they must either resort to the open and flagrant use of bribery with money, which could be more easily detected and punished, and which could only reach a much smaller class of dupes, or they must take their leave of public life. There can be little question that the immediate tendency would be to return to Congress a much larger number of able men of ideas, who would be chosen because of their ability to expound and advocate political principles. The good men already in both branches of our national legislature would be strongly reinforced by colleagues worthy of them, and our legislation would be lifted up at once to a higher plane of public morality and statesmanlike principle. It is literally within the truth to say that by the passage of a thorough civil-service bill, more than one half the time of President, Cabinet, Senators, and Representatives would at a single stroke be freed from a burdensome

and degrading employment, and made available for the study and comprehension of the nation and its wants. Statesmanship would then become possible as it was in former days, before it was smothered by office-seeking.

The English government has already far outstripped us in this great reform, making an accomplished fact of that which we, who boast of our practicality, are still hesitating about. We have sneered at the tenacity with which the ruling classes of England have stuck to their privileges, until they are able to turn the tables upon us and point to our ruling class, more greedy than theirs because the chances of prolonged power are less, clinging to this abuse of patronage when the English aristocracy has discarded it. It was at a meeting at Elgin in Scotland, in September last, that Mr. Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was able to say proudly : —

“ We have thrown open the whole of the public service, not to the more privileged classes, but to the people at large,—to those who possess ability and industry among the lowest classes just as well as among the highest. . . . I do not say that competition will always point out the best person for a clerkship. It is true that it will not, but it has this enormous advantage, it excludes an enormous quantity of incapacity that has hitherto found its way into the public service. . . . I think the greatest benefit of this measure is that we have withdrawn patronage from the dominion of party and have given it to the people ; and it will be the people’s own fault if they don’t keep it for themselves now that they have got it.”

It will be a proud day for the American people also, when one of its statesmen can truthfully take up these words and declare, “ We, too, have withdrawn patronage from the dominion of party and given it to the people.”

Prussia had long since led the way, under the guidance of her Stein and her Scharnhorst, and showed the world what could be done in making an intelligent people by general education, and a model civil and military service by applying to them the rigid principle of selection, without favoritism in the one or exemption in the other. She is now demonstrating what economy, thrift, and power may be the result of such simple means. With our liberty in the place of her monarchy, we ought to be able to reach still higher and better results,

and show the world a model of administration as well as of freedom.

There should be no controversy among the friends of civil-service reform as to the statutory means by which the result is to be reached. Anything which distinctly and unmistakably enounces the true principles of open competition and permanent tenure will serve as a rallying-point, and can be perfected as experience may demonstrate the practicable improvements. Mr. Jenckes in the House, and Mr. Schurz in the Senate, have ably conceived and advocated the principle contended for in these pages, and the bills prepared by either would, if passed, be efficient to destroy the abuse we are fighting. It may, however, be well to consider whether the simplest possible expression of the ideas held in common by all civil-service reformers would not draw about it the strongest support.

The Executive would be charged with carrying into effect the measure that might be enacted, and the heads of departments, under the observation of the friends of the measure and stimulated by a public sentiment manifestly growing rapidly stronger in support of the reform, would undoubtedly seek with earnestness for the easiest and most satisfactory mode of carrying the principle into practice. If hesitation or obstruction should become apparent, the correction by legislation in detail could then be easily applied.

Before closing this examination of the subject, another phase of the relations of the Executive to the appointing power seems worthy of consideration. We ought not to overlook the fact that in lopping off the abuses of patronage we find it necessary, in order to remove it from party control, to diminish very greatly the power and influence of the President upon the legislative department of the government. It is true that the exertion of an influence by means of the distribution of patronage has been in itself, as we have seen, a source of corruption; yet it has been a great power, and the removal of it must diminish the importance of the Executive among the co-ordinate branches of the government. The patronage of the administration in the hands of an adroit and unscrupulous manager would make him almost omnipotent with an ordinary

legislative body ; but without it, unless some other means were used to restore a part of the lost influence, the Executive would become a mere cipher in determining the larger policy of the government. For many reasons such a result is not desirable. A co-operation of Executive and legislature in that determination of measures which precedes the legislative act is demonstrably necessary to good government. The knowledge of the intimate working of the laws themselves can only be had by those whose duty it is to administer them, and no legislation can be safe unless the executive departments can in some form bring their experience to bear upon the discussion and determination of statutes which may change the whole current of the administration of the government. Scarcely a session of Congress passes without the enactment of laws containing the most embarrassing interferences with, or changes in, the established modes of procedure in the various departments. Thus, some years ago, when the Committee on Public Lands had prepared, with the assistance of the Land Office, a careful revision of the statutes relating to the settlement and sale of the wild lands of the West, and had procured the passage of the act correcting inconsistencies and simplifying processes, it was found that *pari passu* with it had gone through another act nominally to establish a Land Office in Colorado, but containing also a clause introducing the direst confusion into the well-digested system which the committee had laboriously perfected. No one had noticed the mischief who chose to expose it, and the work of the committee for the session was in an important part neutralized for the lack of some one on the floor familiar with the working of the Land Office, and able to speak with some authority as to the collision between the two bills. Precisely such duties in other constitutional governments devolve upon the Ministry, and our legislation suffers at every session for lack of the presence in Congress of the Cabinet officers of the government. The instances are so numerous, that the embarrassment is rather with the abundance than with the lack of them. Whoever may have the curiosity to look through debates on bills granting lands to railways will frequently stumble upon assertions that the amount which the corporation can get under the proposed act is a mere bagatelle ; that the

lands are mostly entered already ; and that a trifling assistance is all the railway can hope to procure. Yet it is incontestable that under just such assertions, feebly contested if at all, and rarely if ever met by an authoritative and official declaration of the actual extent of the grant sought for, millions upon millions of acres of the public domain have been given away. It is not necessary to inquire whether the grant even of millions of acres may not in some instances have been advisable : the point is that such grants should never be made without full and authentic official statements of the exact extent of the territory included ; and such statements will very rarely be procured, or the debate delayed to procure them, unless the departments are represented on the floor.

So when the appropriation bills are under consideration, what a relief it would be to Congress and the country to have the Secretary of the Treasury and other heads of departments present to explain all the items of the budget, in regard to which the most industrious committee can never be fully informed or carry in their memories the explanations they have received at the several bureaus.

The necessities and advantages of the change we are now considering have been so apparent, that bills have been introduced at different times and by members of all parties, providing seats for the Cabinet officers on the floors of Congress, and authorizing them to make official statements in answer to interrogatories, and, under certain circumstances to take part in the debates. No doubt the proposition would have met with much greater favor but for the fear of enlarging executive powers and influences which the possession of the Federal patronage made too formidable already. When, however, the patronage abuse shall have been destroyed, every reason will seem to favor giving the Executive a legitimate presence and pure influence in the legislation of the country, where formerly the influence was none the less real, and the means of exerting it every way demoralizing and corrupting.

A great advantage to be derived from such a participation of duties would be found in the necessity which would then exist for the Cabinet to be in the proper sense of the word a ministry, with a definite and avowed policy on public measures of

importance. The tendency in our government has been strongly in the direction of bureaucracy, each department, to use one of Mr. Lincoln's sayings concerning them, "running its own machine," with little or no attempt at harmony or co-operation. Indeed, what difference does it make whether the Secretary of State or Postmaster-General agrees with or dissents from the financial policy of the Treasury Department? The agreement or disagreement can scarcely be felt, except in casual conversations those gentlemen may have with members of Congress in their leisure hours. There is no legitimate and regular method provided by which the Cabinet shall exert its influence as a whole, unless it be supposed that the annual message of the President furnishes such a channel of influence. But no one familiar with our public affairs for the past dozen years will pretend that the message has any such significance, or that if it had, its weight with Congress has borne any definite proportion to the power of enforcing a policy by wielding the patronage. Let the Cabinet, however, be placed in the eyes of the public, where they must express their agreements or their differences upon matters of public importance, and, from the very necessity of the case, they will become at once a compact and thoroughly organized body, who can only be selected with a view to their known agreement on general policy and their special fitness to be its representatives in their several departments. No doubt this would result in their being more uniformly chosen from among men of experience upon the floor of either house; but, with the elevating influence of a thorough reform of the civil service, and the devotion of our rulers' time to statesmanship instead of office-jobbing, we may expect to find a congressional career growing more attractive to a large class of our best men who have proverbially avoided it; and there would be much less objection to making Congress the common route to high administrative employment.

With great hesitation, another and final advantage of such a change is submitted, which we may not be permitted wholly to overlook. As the Cabinet would be before the country, where their acts, opinions, and views could not be concealed, Cabinet changes, like ministerial crises in other constitutional governments, would carry with them their own explanation, and be

freed from the degrading gossip concerning personal motives and character, and the compromising and contradictory stories of newspaper "interviewers," which are now the bane and the shame of American politics.

From whatever point we view it, therefore, in its collateral as well as in its direct consequences, a reform of the civil service promises nothing but good, and we may reasonably hope to see the day when the present opponents of the reform will be anxious to hide from public notice the fact that they tried to prevent those who (to use again the language of the English statesman) would withdraw patronage from the dominion of party and give it to the people.

JACOB D. COX.

ART. V. — *Histoire de la Prusse depuis la Mort de Frédéric II.* Par EUG. VÉRON. Paris: Baillière. 1867.

La Prusse contemporaine et ses Institutions. Par M. K. HILLEBRAND. Paris: Baillière. 1867.

THERE is probably no nation of Europe whose early successes were less popular than those of Prussia. From the first her position has had a good deal of the *parvenu* about it; and it was only under the pressure of necessity that the great powers sullenly recognized her as one of themselves. The sympathies of the European peoples, again, were unanimously against her. The conservative among them were too closely drawn towards Austria not to catch some prejudice against her rival; and liberals turned with repugnance from a power which, to their eyes, personified absolutism in its hardest and least attractive form, — military absolutism.

Why Prussia should have had, at any one epoch of her history, the particular frontiers then pertaining to her, rather than other frontiers, depended upon the political contingencies of the times, and upon nothing else. She annexed Silesia and Glatz in 1742, because, thanks to the military genius of the Great Frederick, she was strong enough to annex them. In 1744 she seized hold of Eastern Friesland for the same